

How to Use the Competencies, Benchmarks, Indicators, and Learning Targets of the *SC Standard for World Language Proficiency*

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for the *SC Standard for World Language Proficiency (SCSWLP)*

The rationale for *SC Standard for World Language Proficiency* stems from the need to provide a more transparent, learner-friendly document that clearly describes benchmarks of what learners can do with language at various stages. Its intent is to recognize that everyone can learn a language when learning is based on real-life competencies and measured against realistic expectations.

The Need For a Transparent Document

All stakeholders win by understanding the *process* of language learning. It should not be a mysterious process known only to the world language teacher. The proficiency levels described in the SCSWLP are based on the 2012 American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) *Proficiency Guidelines* and, as such, are the gold standard for college and career-readiness. In the workplace, employees' language proficiency is defined on the Novice to Distinguished continuum, not by grades on a transcript.

This Standard document helps motivate learning by clarifying how to set achievable goals, self-assess, and chart progress by using "I can" statements. Learners thus take ownership of their individual language development. The Standard document guides the facilitation of language learning toward more functional, communicative and intercultural goals, rather than those of language structure and cultural fact. It provides examples of learning targets that can be used regardless of age, grade, level, or content studied. By posting daily learning targets and celebrating success, teachers can model behavior that leads learners to become autonomous learners. This document provides a clearer understanding to all – parents, administrators, and especially to learners – of what they need to know and be able to do to move to the next proficiency level.

Organization of the SCSWLP

See page 6 of the *South Carolina Standard for World Language Proficiency* for a detailed explanation.

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One Standard

The Standard is the **vision statement** that summarizes the goal of language learning in SC.

Every learner will use a world language, other than English, to engage in meaningful, intercultural communication, understand and interpret the spoken and written language, and present information, concepts and ideas in local and global communities.

Through understanding another language, they will gain an understanding of the perspectives of other cultures and compare the language and cultures with their own.

Summary of Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

Core Performance Competencies for Modern Languages

The Language Competencies are based on the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. The Intercultural Competencies are based on the culture triangle: products, practices, perspectives AND appropriate cultural interaction using the target language. Both sets of competencies spiral up from Novice to Advanced in the SCSWLP.

Language Competencies	Intercultural Competencies
1. Interpretive Listening (IL) and Reading (IR) I can interpret information, concepts, and ideas from a variety of culturally authentic sources on a variety of topics.	4. Investigation of Cultural Products and Practices (CPP) I can use my language skills to investigate the world beyond my immediate environment.
2. Interpersonal Communication (IC) I can exchange information, concepts, and ideas with a variety of speakers or readers on a variety of topics in a culturally appropriate context.	5. Understanding of Cultural Perspectives (CP) I can use my language skills to recognize and understand others' ways of thinking as well as my own.
3. Presentational Speaking (PS) and Writing (PW) I can present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics in a culturally appropriate context.	6. Participation in Cultural Interaction (CIA) I can use my language skills and cultural understanding to interact in a cultural context other than my own.

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Competencies for Classical Languages

While the focus of classical languages is the interpretation of ancient texts, recent studies and practices have shown that speaking and writing in the target language can have dramatic effects on the learner's ability to comprehend written language.

Language Competencies	Cultural Competencies
1. Interpretive Reading (IR) and Listening (IL) I can interpret information, concepts, and ideas from a variety of adapted or authentic sources on a variety of topics.	4. Investigation of Cultures' Products and Practices (CPP) I can use my language skills to investigate the world beyond my immediate environment.
2. Interpersonal Communication (IC) I can exchange information, concepts, and ideas on a variety of topics.	5. Understanding of Cultures' Perspectives (CP) I can use my language skills to recognize and understand others' ways of thinking as well as my own.
3. Presentational Speaking (PS) and Writing (PW) I can present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.	6. Application of Cultural Connections (CC) I can make my knowledge of language and understanding of classical cultures relevant to the modern world.

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Benchmarks

Benchmarks are statements that summarize a mode of communication for a particular proficiency sub-level (e.g. Novice Low). They are used for course proficiency targets.

They are achieved when learners demonstrate **consistency** over time. Consistency is demonstrated by performance assessments.

INTERPRETIVE		INTERPERSONAL	PRESENTATIONAL	
Learner Benchmark NL.IL Interpretive Listening	Learner Benchmark NL.IR Interpretive Reading	Learner Benchmark NL.IC Interpersonal Communication	Learner Benchmark NL.PS Presentational Speaking	Learner Benchmark NL.PW Presentational Writing
NL.IL <i>I can recognize a few memorized words and phrases when I hear them spoken.</i>	NL.IR <i>I can recognize a few letters or characters. I can identify a few memorized words and phrases when I read.</i>	NL.IC <i>I can communicate on some very familiar topics using single words and phrases that I have practiced and memorized.</i>	NL.PS <i>I can present information about myself and some other very familiar topics using single words or memorized phrases.</i>	NL.PW <i>I can copy some familiar words or phrases.</i>

Indicators

Indicators break down the benchmarks into manageable chunks for unit planning.

Learning Indicator	Learning Indicator	Learning Indicator	Learning Indicator	Learning Indicator
NL.IL.1 I can occasionally identify the sound of a character or a word.	NL.IR.1 I can occasionally recognize a few letters or characters	NL.IC.1 I can greet my peers.	NL.PS.1 I can recite words and phrases that I have learned.	NL.PW.1 I can copy some characters or letters and words that I see on the wall or board, in a book, or on the computer.

Sample Learning Targets

Learning Targets are specific functional language goals tied to lessons. The Standard does not attempt to include every learning target that might be associated with all lessons. Instead, Sample Learning Targets give context to most learning scenarios.

Lesson planners can customize the Sample Learning Targets or develop additional learning targets as needed for a particular context. Learning targets should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Customized learning targets must be aligned with the designated proficiency sublevel.

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Sample Learning Targets	Sample Learning Targets	Sample Learning Targets	Sample Learning Targets	Sample Learning Targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can recognize the sound of a few letters when they are spoken or spelled out. I can... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can alphabetize a few names or words. I can match a character in a headline to a supporting visual. I can... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can say hello and goodbye. I can... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can count from 1-10. I can say the date and the day of the week. I can list the months and seasons. I can... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can copy the letters of the alphabet. I can copy the characters that I am learning. I can copy a simple phrase like "Happy Birthday," "Happy Holidays," etc. I can...



The standard, core competencies, benchmarks, indicators and sample learning targets are meant to guide learning and should be shared with **learners and made available to parents, administrators and other stakeholders.**

HOW TO ALIGN INSTRUCTION TO THE 2013 SCSFWLP

STEP ONE: Establish World Language Course Targets.

Following a backward design approach, use the “I can” benchmarks to set learner outcome expectations for specific timeframes. Start with the last language course in the language sequence and work back to the first course, choosing the benchmarks that target the proficiency level that learners are to achieve.

Refer to the suggested South Carolina proficiency targets (posted at <https://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/WorldLanguages.cfm> for elementary, dual immersion, middle and high school programs to inform decisions, especially if there is no district or school data concerning learners’ proficiency levels. Collect data on the proficiency levels of learners throughout the course in order to assess progress toward the course proficiency targets. When schools and districts work collaboratively to develop common curriculum, formative and summative assessments, and end-of-course assessments, learners are more likely to show growth in proficiency.

Performance tasks are the only measures of proficiency levels. Traditional tests, quizzes, homework, and participation grades do not show growth over time.

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STEP 2 Develop a series of Integrated Performance Assessments (IPAs) based on specific proficiency targets for each world language course.

Select the relevant indicators from the benchmark course proficiency targets. Each IPA must be carefully designed so that the units in the beginning of the course have lower proficiency demands that gradually increase over the course timeframe to meet the final course proficiency target. See example from chart below.

The following charts are based on **The ACTFL Assessment of Performance Towards Proficiency (AAPPL) Score Report Terminology** which shows that the intermediate level is subdivided into more levels than the Novice level because, based on national test data, it takes more time to achieve Intermediate –level proficiency (<http://aappl.actfl.org/scores>).

Guidelines	Performance Scale	Performance Score
Intermediate High	INTERMEDIATE	I-5
Intermediate Mid		I-4
Intermediate Mid		I-3
Intermediate Mid		I-2
Intermediate Low		I-1
Novice High	NOVICE	N-4
Novice Mid		N-3
Novice Mid		N-2
Novice Low		N-1

Even though learners often progress through the Novice level within a year or even a semester, gaining Intermediate-level proficiency requires considerably longer timeframes – multiple years and/or semesters.

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High School Proficiency Targets for Alphabetic Languages (French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, etc.)

Mode & Skill	Course1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
Interpretive Listening	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3	Intermediate Mid I-4
Interpretive Reading	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3
Interpersonal	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3	Intermediate Mid I-4
Presentational Speaking	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3	Intermediate Mid I-4
Presentational Writing	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3



Select the relevant indicators from the above benchmarks for each Course 1 IPA.

Interpretive Listening	Interpretive Reading	Interpersonal Speaking	Presentational Speaking	Presentational Writing
Learning Indicator NH.IL.1 I can sometimes understand simple questions or statements on familiar topics.	Learning Indicator NM.IR.1 I can recognize words and phrases and characters with the help of visuals.	Learning Indicator NH.PS.1 I can present information about my life using phrases and simple sentences.	Learning Indicator NH.PS.1 I can present information about my life using phrases and simple sentences.	Learning Indicator NM.PW. I can write lists and memorized phrases on familiar topics.

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High School Proficiency Targets for Logographic Languages (Mandarin, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)

Mode & Skill	Course1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
Interpretive Listening	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3
Interpretive Reading	Novice Low N-1	Novice Mid N-2	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1
Interpersonal	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3
Presentational Speaking	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2	Intermediate Mid I-3
Presentational Writing	Novice Mid N-2	Novice Mid N-3	Novice High N-4	Intermediate Low I-1	Intermediate Mid I-2

STEP 3 Develop lessons based on the above-mentioned IPAs.

Develop learning targets that set daily lesson outcomes and post them for learners to see. Use them to develop formative assessments that allow learners to understand how close they are to meeting the indicators. Refer to the **Sample Learning Targets** for ideas and support in the development of these learning targets.



Benchmarks and indicators are aligned to ACTFL proficiency levels and sublevels and as such should NOT be changed. The “I can...” statements at the end of each **Sample Learning Target** section are for teachers and learners to customize learning targets for additional contexts. Customized “I can” statements must be aligned to the **targeted** proficiency sublevel (i.e. Interpretive Reading, Novice Mid for Course 1).

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STEP 4 Develop rubrics that are proficiency-level specific.

Each course must have rubrics aligned to the course proficiency level. For example, Course 1 rubrics describe Novice characteristics and include Intermediate Low in the rubric to indicate movement towards the next sub level. See *Implementing Performance Assessment* at <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/implementing-integrated-performance-assessment> for ready-made rubrics. Refer to the suggested South Carolina proficiency rubrics posted at <https://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/WorldLanguages.cfm>

“I can” statements are not intended to be used as assessments *per se*. Use them as criteria for rubrics and as suggestions for performance tasks, exit slips, reflections for learning, etc.

STEP 5 Analyze grading practices.

Quarter grades based on quizzes, tests, homework, and participation do not reflect progress towards proficiency. Consider basing the grade on learner performance in the modes:

Interpretive listening

Interpretive reading

Interpersonal

Presentational speaking

Presentational writing

SUGGESTION

Consider using LinguaFolio® which is designed to facilitate differentiation. Use the “I can” statements as a diagnostic tool to estimate the individual proficiency levels of learners for differentiated planning. Having learners self-assess using the “I can” statements can serve as a pre-test to inform instructional decisions that individualize learner pathways. See http://www.ncssfl.org/LinguaFolio/index.php?linguafolio_index

RESOURCES

<https://ed.sc.gov/agency/ccr/Standards-Learning/WorldLanguages.cfm>